

T/SOL/4/1/11

STATE RESEARCH

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in 1965 was one example of the police's response to the problems of policing, especially in cities. Drawing on the experience of the New York Police's 'Tactical Force' the Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Mr Douglas Webb, put forward a proposal in 1964 that a special squad should be formed for: 'preventive patrolling of estates subject to hooliganism and housebreaking' (**Scotland Yard press release**, May 1973). The plan was to create a large, centrally-controlled, force split into a number of units strategically situated around London which could carry out two functions: (i) to mount preventive patrols in specific areas and (ii) to act as a force that could be brought together to 'provide saturation policing' (op.cit). The original conception of the SPG was thus to create a police support **anti-crime** unit which could aid local divisional forces within London. An increased police presence on the ground would, it was thought, 'maintain public confidence in the police' (op.cit.). This proposal to set up the SPG was accepted by the Commissioner, the Home Office and the Home Secretary and, by April 26, 1965, it was fully operational.

The SPG today (and many of its provincial counterparts) is a very different beast. The SPG now also plays a prominent role in industrial disputes and demonstrations, and is fully trained and equipped for anti-terrorist work. It is, in short, a para-military force. The development of the SPG from an **anti-crime** unit to a **para-military** one has led to one very obvious contradiction, namely, that having been trained (and used) in its para-military role it still continues to be used in the community as an anti-crime unit (the consequences of which are examined later). The decision to give the SPG a para-military role occurred in 1972 as the result of a decision not to create a 'third force' in Britain.

The 'third force' debate

The idea of creating a third force in Britain has been considered and rejected

on several occasions. A third force consists of para-military police who are trained to deal with pickets during strikes, political demonstrations and terrorism. They are usually equipped with sophisticated riot control equipment like water cannon, CS gas, armoured personnel carriers as well as being trained marksmen with pistols, rifles and sub-machine guns. On the continent they are the rule rather than the exception – in France the CRS, in Holland the Marechaussee and, in West Germany the Bereitschaftspolizei.

In 1961 a Home Office working party was set up to investigate the need for a 'third separate policing force' (**Time Out**, 23.3.73). When the working party reported, secretly, ten years later it concluded that the British public would not support the creation of a para-military force and that the existing police forces should be re-trained and re-equipped to fill the gaps that existed. Although the idea was seriously considered in 1968 when mass demonstration over Vietnam stretched police resources, it was rejected. The need for a third force again became an issue after the mass confrontation between the police and strikers at the Salfley coal depot in the miners' strike of 1972. Faced by vastly superior numbers the police capitulated and the strikers succeeded in stopping the supply of fuel to power stations (on this occasion army units, armed with shields and truncheons, were available but not committed).

The strongest argument in favour of a third force was that it would relieve the conventional police of their aggressive role and enable them to maintain friendly relations with the public. Against this, the continental experience demonstrated that riot police generated more hatred and counter-violence than the ordinary police. 'Unlike the policeman on the beat, they have little chance to mend their fences by being seen as friends and protectors, because they seldom meet people until they become rioters' (Major R Clutterbuck, *Army Quarterly*, October, 1973).

In 1972, the Tory government set up the National Security Committee which included representatives from the police, the military, and key ministries. This Committee reached the same conclusions as the Home Office working party, largely because the police argued vociferously against the creation of a new force. Although the police again won the day this time, there was a price to pay. The National Security Committee recommendations went beyond those of the working party: the police should revamp training in riot control and firearms, and clear lines should be laid down about when the army was to be called in (see, **Bulletin No 8**), joint police-military exercises should be held regularly, and plainclothes units of the Special Air Service (SAS) should be on permanent stand-by for any situation the police could not handle.

In theory the distinctive roles of the army and police were to be maintained, and there was to be no third force. As one military expert, Brig W.F.K. Thompson expressed it at the time, the police 'must be acceptable to the majority of citizens', while the army 'the final repository of arbitrary force... needs no acceptance' (**D. Telegraph**, 28.8.72). In practice the police, from this point, became committed to a particular path which was to greatly change their role.

The consequences for the police

The changes in training and ideology affected the whole of the police force in Britain. Firearms training increased and the weapons available were reviewed. Riot training (or 'crowd control' as it is sometimes called) with riot shields and batons and the use of CS gas and water cannon is now a part of training in most police forces. Even rural police forces have been affected by these changes because under a long-standing arrangement (since the last century) every force is committed to giving 'mutual aid' to neighbouring forces. Most forces specially trained a percentage of officers in more advanced techniques so that, if called on, they are prepared for all eventualities. For example, the Greater

Manchester force trains selected officers from a number of surrounding forces in riot control (see later). In addition, regular police-military exercises are conducted, and the first test of their co-operation came during the firemen's strike in 1977 when the army relied heavily on the police's local knowledge, headquarters and communications system (see **Bulletin No 10**).

One of the leaders in adapting to the new roles given to the police were, as usual, the Metropolitan Police whose practices have historically been the most advanced and therefore most likely to be adopted by other forces. The new Commissioner appointed in April 1972 was Robert Mark. It is said that he was impressed by the techniques used by the Royal Ulster Constabulary which he saw at first hand when he visited Northern Ireland as a member in 1969 of the Hunt inquiry (into the RUC and the B Specials). He had also accompanied Major General Deane-Drummond on a tour in 1970 organised by the Ministry of Defence to America, the Far East and West Europe to look at riot control techniques (see **Riot Control** by A. Deane-Drummond, Royal United Services Institute, 1975). Another key figure was Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Gerrard, who then was in charge of public order in London and of the SPG. In 1971 Gerrard went to the US Police National Academy in Atlanta, Georgia where, with other police chiefs, the use of riot squads and paramilitary forces was the topic under discussion.

In 1972, Gerrard organised the new training and equipment for the London SPG. Some of the tactics adopted by the London police, and later by other forces, were those developed and used by the army and the RUC SPG (formed in 1970 after the B Specials had been disbanded and replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment) in Northern Ireland. The introduction of 'snatch squads' and 'wedges' in demonstrations, and random stop and searches and roadblocks on the streets were 'based on the Army's experience in Ulster' (**Sunday Times**, 3.2.74). The Provisional IRA bombing campaign, which began in

1973 on the mainland, and international terrorism gave strength to the new directions already determined for the police.

Fifteen of the 24 SPG-type units which now exist were formed in 1972 or after. Every major city now has its own SPG, many of them playing the dual role of anti-crime and para-military units. The SPG in London, and those in the provinces, are involved more and more in industrial disputes and political demonstrations, and finally by having an anti-terrorist capacity they are developing the ability to take on some of the functions that had previously been the preserve of the army — the ability to kill.

The Special Patrol Group in London

This SPG, formed in April 1965, was initially comprised of 100 officers drawn from the uniformed police. It was divided into four units based in different parts of London, each equipped with Blue Bedford vans, with 3 Sergeants and 20 PCs under the command of an Inspector. The number of officers had grown to 130 by 1967 and in November 1969 a fifth unit was formed. In April 1972, the sixth and final unit was created. Today, the SPG consists of 204 officers, divided into six units, with each unit having 3 sergeants, 28 male PCs and 2 female PCs under the command of an Inspector. A Chief Superintendent is in overall charge of the SPG. The SPG thus has its own independent command structure — the A.9 Branch at Scotland Yard — for this reason they wear the letters 'CO' (Commissioners Office) on their shoulders.

Since its formation SPG recruits have been drawn from volunteers from the 23 London police divisions. Their average age is 31, and many have ten years service or more. The turnover rate however is high — currently around 25 per cent a year. This is partly due to the unsocial hours the work entails (they are always on call 24 hours a day for an emergency), and partly because service in the group is limited to two years.

Each of the units has three blue Ford

Transit vans and a number of unmarked cars for surveillance. The Transits carry 12 officers, one of these being the driver and another the radio operator. The vans have two radio channels, one the general Metropolitan police wavelength the other a specific SPG one. The driver and the radio operator are responsible for issuing arms or other equipment.

The role developed by the London SPG falls into two distinct phases. The first from 1965 when their prime role was to give support to local forces and help in major CID investigations. The second phase started in 1972 when, as we have seen, new roles were taken on by the police. Robert Mark's first annual report as Commissioner made explicit the expanded role of the SPG. Two units were sent to Heathrow airport for two months as part of anti-terrorist measures; one unit was permanently assigned, from October 1972, to guarding embassies in the centre of London; special attention was given to drugs; and units of the group were present at demonstrations 'at which militant elements were thought likely to cause disorder', in particular in 'the protracted industrial disputes involving dockers and building workers' (Commissioner's Report, 1972).

The same report announced that the SPG were conducting massive random 'stops-and-searches' of pedestrians and cars. During 1972, the SPG stopped 16,430 people in the streets and a further 25,640 stop and searches of vehicles and their passengers were carried out. Mark sought to legitimate the introduction of random checks and roadblocks by pointing out that the Metropolitan Police (unlike most other forces) has the power, under Section 66 of the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act to stop and search anyone where there is reason to suspect that goods stolen or unlawfully obtained may be found. The introduction of these practices, which have continued ever since, cannot be justified by the number of arrests made (the number actually convicted is not given). As the table shows, at the highest level, one in 10 (in 1973) were arrested and at the lowest

one in 16 (1976); why the remaining tens of thousands should have been stopped and searched for no good reason remains unexplained.

	Total Stops	Arrests
1965	—	396
1966	—	727
1967	—	1,057
1968	—	1,318
1969	—	—
1970	—	not known
1971	—	—
1972	41,980	3,142
1973	34,534	3,339
1974	41,304	3,262
1975	65,628	4,125
1976	60,898	3,773
1977*	(14,018)	2,990
1978	—	4,166

*Note: The figure for stops in 1977 is only for those stopped as pedestrians. McNee states that the low arrest figures for 1977 were due to anti-terrorist deployment; no figures are given for stops in 1978 but the arrest figure is the highest on record which suggests stops in the region of 60,000 plus.

The London SPG's record

Since 1972 the SPG have been concerned in so many situations which have led to violent confrontations that it is impossible to cover them all in this paper. A few perhaps should be singled out. As already mentioned in October 1972 one unit was permanently assigned to guard London embassies. On February 20, 1973 two armed SPG officers entered the Indian High Commission in the Aldwych, London, and shot dead two young Pakistanis, who were armed with a sword and toy pistols (the SPG were withdrawn from this duty in 1974 when the Diplomatic Protection Squad was formed). The SPG were sent into the June 1974 Red Lion Square demonstration against the National Front — when Kevin Gateley died. One SPG officer told the Scarman inquiry into the killing that his unit had cut through the demonstrators 'like knife through butter'. The behaviour of the SPG during the long strike at

Grunwick led the 1978 TUC Annual Conference to pass a resolution calling for a public inquiry into their activities.

The role of the SPG at Southall this April where they were introduced literally to teach the anti-National Front demonstrators a lesson has already been documented (see *Evening Standard* and *Evening News* 24.4.79 and *Bulletin* No 12). Calls for the SPG to be disbanded, in parliament and outside, have been rejected by the Commissioner David McNee and the Home Secretary, although it has already been admitted that as a result of the internal inquiry being carried out into the death of Blair Peach five members of the SPG have been disciplined and transferred to other duties (*Guardian*, 15.6.79).

Probably the most objectionable use of the SPG in London has been their employment in 'saturation policing' (their anti-crime role) for periods between three and four weeks in areas with so-called 'high crime rates'. These 'high crime' areas are dominantly the the working class areas of the city including those with large black communities. Areas like Brixton, Lewisham, Hackney, Peckham and Notting Hill appear year after year on the list of areas the SPG have been sent into.

Stops and searches

A high proportion of the stop and searches carried out occur when the SPG is on 'assignment' in a 'high crime area'. For example, in Lewisham in 1975 the SPG were called in. In the course of their operations in the area, the SPG stopped 14,000 people and made over 400 arrests (20 per cent of the stops and 10 per cent of the arrests made by the whole SPG in 1975). Such experiences are now so common in London that a detailed look at one of these operations in 'saturation policing', in Lambeth in 1978, is the most productive means of conveying their full impact.

In November last year, over half the total strength of the SPG, 120 officers, plus 30 CID officers from Scotland Yard were sent into Lambeth because of its 'high crime'

rate. For a month they carried out mass stop and searches, set up roadblocks, conducted drugs swoops resulting in 430 arrests for obstruction, alleged theft and drug offences, 'sus' (being suspected of being about to cause an offence), and assault on police officers. The **Daily Telegraph** reported after the operation that 'Three-fifths of those arrested were white, the rest coloured. A high percentage of black people live in the area' (6.12.78). In effect 40 per cent of those arrested were black, more than double the estimated black proportion of the local community. After the operation Assistant Commissioner Kelland of Scotland Yard declared that it had been a highly successful operation leading to a drastic reduction in crime. The experience of the local community was somewhat different.

This SPG operation in Lambeth, the latest of many, led the Lambeth Borough Council to set up its own public inquiry into the relations between the police and the community in the area (see **Bulletin** No 11. For other examples of SPG activities in London see **News Release**, November 1978; **Socialist Worker** 19 and 25 May 1979; **Leveller**, January 1978; **CARF**, March 1979; '**Black People Against the Police**', IRR; '**Racism Who Profits**', CIS).

The activities of the London SPG have led to numerous demands either for a full public inquiry into its function, its exclusion from areas with a large black population, or for its total disbandment. To claim as Commissioner David McNee does that the SPG are just ordinary police officers and not a riot squad is open to contradiction every time they set foot in the community, appear at demonstrations and picket lines. To deny also that they are a para-military force (in public order and anti-terrorist training) also flies in the face of the evidence. A Southern Television hour-long documentary put out in 1976, called 'The Man in the Middle', showed SPG training exercises and equipment. At their main training centre, near the river Lea in East London, they were shown practising the 'wedge' (to break up demonstrations) unarmed combat, and the use of

riot shields and CS gas. The programme also showed the equipment carried by a fully-equipped SPG Transit. These included riot shields, pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, smoke grenades, truncheons and visors.

SPGs outside London

Our survey of all 52 Chief Constables' annual reports in the UK showed that 24 police forces now have SPG-type units. The first two to be formed were the London SPG and the Tactical Patrol Group in Hertfordshire in 1965, followed by Thames Valley (1969), the RUC (1970), Birmingham (1970, now West Midlands), and Derbyshire (1970) who set up similar groups. The big expansion however came after 1972, following the nationally agreed new roles for the police, when 15 more SPGs were created. As SPG-type units have different titles in different forces — Task Force in Avon and Somerset, Tactical Aid Group in Greater Manchester and Support Groups in Strathclyde — and some annual reports are more informative than others, it is important to identify their main characteristics by looking at the roles they play and the training they receive.

The key feature that distinguishes SPGs is that they operate over the whole area covered by a police force, are controlled centrally and have an independent chain of command. [A number of forces do have what they call 'support units' that operate at local divisional level (each police force is divided into a number of divisions), which do not satisfy this criteria.] Like the London SPG, they are drawn from the ranks of the uniformed branch, although some have CID officers attached to them. The SPG units surveyed are generally described as 'mobile support units' and much emphasis is laid on their anti-crime role (e.g. backing-up divisional forces, helping in major incidents, and murder hunts). However, nearly all of them are used in public order situations (strikes, demonstrations and football matches) and most of them have an anti-terrorist capacity (at ports and airports and training in the

use of firearms). Training varies from force to force but most include the use of firearms, riot control (use of batons and shields) and protective clothing (special helmets for example). Finally, it should be said some of the units are still more akin to the original concept of a police support anti-crime unit (like those in Norfolk and Lancashire), while others are a carbon-copy of the London para-military model (in Manchester and Strathclyde).

The differences between SPGs is best illustrated by looking at some examples. In Essex, the Force Support Unit was established in May 1973 with 32 officers. The Unit is concerned with local patrolling, 'public order duties', 'all firearms operations' (82 in 1978), surveillance courses for the whole force, and 'has developed crowd control training to include the use of riot shields (1976 Report). In 1976 the unit was involved in 'hi-jacking exercises at Stansted and Debden' airfields. A total of 194 arrests were made by the Unit in 1978. By contrast, Hertfordshire's Tactical Patrol Group, formed in 1965, is used for random stop and searches in a major way. The figures for those stop and searched and arrested in recent years are:

	Total stops	Arrests
1973	11,439	614
1974	19,582	1,034
1975	21,323	967
1976	20,733	414
1977	17,611	522
1978	12,025	472

The 28-strong Group is split into three units and their duties include 'crime and public order patrols'. They are trained in the use of firearms, crowd control and the use of riot shields (1978 Report).

Nottinghamshire's Special Operations Unit tends, like other groups, to concentrate on certain target groups like the arrest of alleged prostitutes (224 in 1977) and football fans (187 in 1977). All the officers are qualified in the use of firearms (1976 Report). The use of the Unit is not without its contradictions. The Assistant Chief Constable, Mr. Dear, said

of its work: 'They might apparently solve one problem, but in its wake create another of aggravated relationships between minority groups and the police in general. It is then in this atmosphere that the permanent beat officer is expected to continue his work — often finding that his task, which was always difficult and delicate, has now been made almost impossible' (quoted in **The Role of the Police**, by Ben Whittaker).

Greater Manchester and Merseyside

The role played Mr. Anderton's Tactical Aid Group in Manchester provides a strong contrast with the similar unit in Merseyside which was totally re-organised after a strong public campaign about their use of violence and harrassment. Greater Manchester's TAG, as it is popularly known, closely parallels the London model in being a para-military force also carrying out crime-prevention roles. While on the one hand it is used for 'preventative patrols in areas where serious crime is prevalent', it is also used for 'hi-jack and hostage situations', all of its members are 'fully trained in the use of firearms' and have undertaken 'many training exercises' (1976 Report). The 70 officers in TAG are divided into three units based in different parts of the force's area, and each have their own special transport. TAG is used wherever 'public order situations are anticipated ... from crowd control at football matches to politically oriented meetings'. They also run special training programmes in 'all aspects of crowd control' for local divisional support units. These courses are also attended by officers from neighbouring forces — Lancashire, Cheshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire (1977 and 1978 Reports). This latter aspect proved particularly useful when the Greater Manchester force needed outside help during the National Front demonstrations in 1977 and 1978.

The public order and anti-terrorist role played by TAG is quite overt. When the Group was formed in 1976 the Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Collins said:

'They are out front line troops who are raring to go at a minute's notice' (Stretford & Urmston Journal, 29.12.76). TAG have taken part in several anti-terrorist exercises. Some of these have been at Manchester Airport where they would be the first force on the spot if trouble occurred. In March 1978 the New Manchester Review reported that because of this responsibility the force had acquired sub-machine guns and ArmaLite rifles (24.3.78). Despite strenuous denials, the fact that the SAS unit that, in an emergency at the airport, would take over from TAG could take up to three hours to arrive lends credence to this report. TAG also took part in a joint police-military exercise organised with the Home Office in October 1977, when 500 armed police and soldiers sealed off the Collyhurst area of Manchester, diverted buses, and searched cars and pedestrians during a 12 hour 'mock' seige (Manchester Evening News, 1.11.77).

The Merseyside SPG-type unit is the only known case where officers were disciplined, two prosecuted and all the personnel re-assigned after a public campaign over the violence and harrasing tactics used by the unit. The Merseyside Task Force was formed in April 1974 as a 'mobile reserve' for 'disorder, vandalism and crime' (1974 Report). Particular attention was paid by the Force to the Liverpool city centre area and in the first year they made 3,905 arrests. The following year 5,329 arrests were recorded (1975 Report). No mention was made of the growing criticisms of the Force's activities in the annual reports. The general arrest rate was higher in Liverpool by comparison with other cities, particularly for drunkenness — although there was no hard evidence (Sunday Times, 16.2.75) that Liverpool was a more drunken or violent city than any other. More disturbing still was the very high number of arrests for assaults on the police, which was two to three times higher than that in Leeds or Birmingham. Local citizens said that the aggressive practices of Task Force officers was the major contributing factor.

In 1976 Mr. Ken Oxford, previously

Deputy Chief Constable, took over as Chief Constable and one of his first acts was to disband the Task Force. 'This rather forceful type of policing wasn't doing the image much good', Mr Oxford commented (Guardian 20.2.79). His annual report for 1976 blandly reported the formation of a new unit called the Operational Support Division 'following the redistribution of the establishment of the former Task Force'.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Two of the four police forces in Wales have SPG-style units, South Wales and Gwent. The South Wales Special Patrol Group, set up in October 1975, has a total strength of 54 officers. It is split into nine units, one for each division, which come together as a group for public order and other situations. Twenty per cent of the officers are trained marksmen, and all officers are trained in crowd control and the use of riot shields. The Group also runs training courses in crowd control for other officers in the force. The Gwent unit is called the Support Group and has 20 officers assigned to it. Its role is defined as providing local support, help in major crimes, mass searches, surveillance and public order.

Mr George Richards, Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) who runs the South Wales SPG denies that they are an elite force or heavy-handed. This image he says is inevitable because 'they are in a reinforcing role which is often in a public disorder situation where they will be faced with violence' (Western Mail), 26.6.79). Inspector B. Griffiths, Vice-Chairman of the Police Federation and Chairman of the Federation's South Wales branch takes a different view. He looks forward to a return to traditional policing methods and sees SPG-style policing as a reaction to changes in society 'particularly as far as political activities are concerned'. If the laws were changed and properly enforced by the courts then he thought 'we could do away with this semi-military style of policing that is associated with the SPG' (op. cit.).

In Scotland two forces out of eight have

SPG groups — Strathclyde and Central Scotland. The Strathclyde Support Units are based in five different areas with two units assigned to Glasgow, and a total strength of 145 officers. Each of the six units are equipped with special personnel carriers, and are trained in the use of firearms and crowd control.

In May 1975 the Support Unit (SU) was used to break up a demonstration blocking the entrance to a hall booked for a National Front meeting. Over 100 people were arrested, including several prominent trade unionists — half of whom were eventually acquitted. A call for a public enquiry into the police action, supported by the Scottish TUC, was refused. In June this year a sergeant attached to the SU was acquitted of culpable homicide following a direction

from the trial judge that there was insufficient evidence to convict. The case followed the death of a 22-year-old man, who was taken to a police station by a SU unit of 8 men. A former police constable, who was in the SU at the time, and witnessed the death left the force afterwards because he was 'so sickened by the experience'. The constable, the main prosecution witness, told of how he saw the dead man punched and kicked and beaten by several officers. The man died because a blow to the body had split his liver in two (Glasgow Herald, Scotsman 19,20,21 June, 1979).

The Central Scotland Support Unit is much smaller and is used largely in a support role to local divisions and for 'various contingencies' (1978 Report).

SPECIAL PATROL GROUPS IN THE UK

Force	Name of Group	Date established	Size*
England			
Avon & Somerset	Task Force	1973	55
City of London	Special Operations Group	1977	16
Derbyshire	Special Operations Unit	1970	11 (1976)
Essex	Force Support Unit	1973	32 (1974)
Gloucestershire	Task Force	—	—
Greater Manchester	Tactical Aid Group	1976	70 (1977)
Hertfordshire	Tactical Patrol Group	1965	28
Humber-side	Support Group	1978	47
Lancashire	Police Support Unit	1978	—
Merseyside	Task Force	1974 — 76	68 (1975)
	Operational Support Division	1976	—
Metropolitan Police	Special Patrol Group	1965	204
Norfolk	Police Support Unit	—	—
Northumbria	Special Patrol Group	1974	46 (1977)
North Yorkshire	Task Force	1974	—
Nottinghamshire	Special Operations Unit	—	34 (1976)
Staffordshire	Force Support Unit	1976	23
Thames Valley	Support Group	1969	41
West Midlands	Special Patrol Group	1970	85
West Yorkshire	Task Forces	1974	—
Wales			
Gwent	Support Group	1972	20
South Wales	Special Patrol Group	1975	54
Scotland			
Central Scotland	Support Group	—	—
Strathclyde	Support Units	1973	145 (1975)
N. Ireland			
Royal Ulster Constabulary	Special Patrol Group	1970	368

* 1978 figures except where stated

The Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Patrol Group was set up in 1970. It had a similar structure to the London SPG but because of the political situation in the province, its practices were different, including the use of roadblocks, snatch squads and wedges in demonstrations. As we have seen these tactics influenced Robert Mark when he reorganised the London SPG in 1972.

The RUC SPG now has ten units with a total of 368 officers (17 of whom are seconded Royal Military Police officers). Although as the 1973 **Report** remarks the SPG was formed to reinforce 'conventional police work', it is the most clear cut example of a paramilitary force going about its work permanently armed. Its three primary uses are for setting up roadblocks and manning checkpoints, transporting prisoners to and from court, and riot control. In 1978 the SPG made a total of 6,802 'detections' (arrests/charges brought), 5,506 for motoring offences, 845 for public order, 264 for 'ordinary crime', and 187 others. The role played by the RUC's SPG is clearly different to those in the rest of the UK as its 'policing' functions, like the RUC itself, are subordinate to those of the army.

Conclusion

The underlying ambiguity in the development of SPG groups is the dual function the most advanced ones undertake. A combination of an **anti-crime** function in support of local divisions and a **para-military** one, which is a combination of an aggressive public order role and an armed anti-terrorist capacity. The SPGs that fall into this category tend to be all the more aggressive and violent when called on to undertake normal policing roles in local communities at strikes and demonstrations. Another problem, where the para-military role is underdeveloped or non-existent, is that as an elite group they have no connections with the localities they are sent into and therefore no need to establish and maintain a relationship with the local people.

REVIEWS

CAMBODIA DESTROYED

Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia, by William Shawcross. London, André Deutsch, 1979, 467pp, £6.95.

Richard Nixon was elected President of the United States in November 1968, on a promise to extricate the nation from the Vietnam war. He promptly appointed Dr Kissinger his National Security Assistant. Within a month of his inauguration, Nixon had received favourably a request from his commander in Vietnam to authorise the bombing of neutral Cambodia. On March 18, 1969 such bombing began in conditions of utmost secrecy explicitly imposed by the White House. The Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force were not informed, nor were any of the Congressional committees which constitutionally enable Congress to authorise and fund warfare. The official computerised military record-keeping system, recording bombing raids, targets, destruction and flying times, was beaten by an elaborate system of false 'dual reporting'. All military personnel involved violated Article 107 of the Military Code of Justice, which provides that anyone 'who, with intent to deceive, signs any false record, return, regulation, order or other official document, knowing that same to be false ... shall be punished as a court martial may direct.'

When the conspiracy was not immediately detected, the bombing continued, codenamed operation MENU, after the breakfast briefing that launched it. The Joint Chiefs informed the White House in April that many of the target areas for saturation bombing were populated by Cambodians, mostly peasants. By June 1969, 3,630 B52 raids had flown into

Cambodia all along the South Vietnam border.

Thus began the destruction of Cambodia, later completed by invasion and, (after the Paris agreements in early 1973 to end the war), some of the heaviest carpet bombing in history. The invasion in April 1970 totally ignored Congress, although the US Constitution reserves to it the power to declare war, in order (as Abraham Lincoln put it) that 'no man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.' Nobody knows the casualty figures. Already by February 1972 a Senate sub-committee found that two million Cambodians had been made homeless by the war, in a population of only seven millions.

Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia was in fact soon reported briefly in the May 9, 1969 issue of the **New York Times**, but this provoked no public outcry. Kissinger immediately asked FBI Director Hoover to find the source of the leak and promised to 'destroy whoever did this.' That day the FBI illegally violated Fourth Amendment rights by putting a wiretap on the home of Kissinger's assistant on the National Security Council staff. This attempted cover-up of foreign policy crimes marked the beginning of the domestic abuses of power later known as Watergate. (Kissinger went on to have many others wiretapped, including Henry Brandon of the **Sunday Times**).

In July 1974, just before Nixon's enforced resignation, the House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee approved changes on the Watergate cover-up and on wiretaps in the impeachment of Nixon, but rejected the accusation of Nixon waging secret illegal war in Cambodia. It is clear that both Congress and the large sections of the American public eventually disturbed by the Watergate revelations were unwilling to insist on Executive legality and accountability in the field of the greatest potential crimes of the state, namely war. Shawcross praises US democracy and raises no question about this, retreating into the untenable thesis that the 'sideshow' of Cambodia merely revealed the responsibility of the madman and his

ambitious henchman; whereas it was part of an Indochina and global strategy which involved many other accomplices and criminals.

Nixon's reputation was irretrievably destroyed, but Kissinger's was elevated. He was confirmed as Secretary of State in September 1973. All those who seek legality and accountability in public life will study with reward Kissinger's response to this devastating book, which if facts alone mattered would mark his permanent disgrace. They will do well also to note how quickly the 'main show' of Vietnam has been transformed by the US political establishment and media from a crime into a regrettable mistake.

ON FASCISTS

FASCISM IN BRITAIN. An Annotated Bibliography. Philip Rees. Harvester Press [Sussex] & Humanities Press [New Jersey], £15.

Philip Rees, the head of acquisitions at York university library, has compiled a list of 893 publications by and about 'fascists in Britain', characterised most of them in entries ranging from a few to 300 words, put an introductory essay in the front and an index on the back. That's enough to save any researcher £15 worth of time. Beyond that, however, its value is limited. The essay on 'What is fascism?' is much too ambitious for its fourteen pages, and could helpfully have been an essay limited to fascism in Britain; a problematic enough notion. 'Only two fascist or fascist movements have attained any real importance in British politics, the BUF (British Union of Fascists) and the National Front', Rees states. And unexplained distinctions like fascist/fascistic abound.

The essay flits from an early Twenties article by a French fascist on the theatricality of life after World War 1 to Guy Debord's Situationist views on 'the society of the spectacle' and 'the Angry Brigade who acted in the name of Situationism'. According to Rees, 'the

Baader-Meinhof gang', Rose Dugdale, Che Guevara and 'many New Left groups' (whatever they might be, in 1979), 'all these have obvious echoes in fascist theory or practice'. 'Echoes' are hardly substantial enough connections to support such a grouping.

Unfortunately the essay's pretentious scholasticism permeates the short accounts of the items in the bibliography. The items go back to the British Fascists in 1923 and a large proportion of them relate to Sir Oswald Mosley and his BUF. Just under 200 of the 893 items relate to the postwar year. Without explanation, Rees divides these into those on 'British fascism and the radical right' until 1967, the year the National Front was formed, but only 'the radical right' since 1967. Certainly if the intention was to cover the radical right since 1967 the neglect of radical right groups other than the Front is indefensible. The bibliography nonetheless contains useful sources for anti-fascists.



NEW BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

This listing does not preclude a future review.

Criminal Justice Reform, Scottish Council For Civil Liberties, 146, Holland Street, Glasgow, 20p. Briefing paper on plans to reform police powers north of the border.

Terrorism And The European Community, Charles Fletcher-Cooke OC, European Conservative Group. Calls for 'closest co-operation between national police forces perhaps on an institutionalised basis'.

Legality And The Community, edited by Paul D. Brown and Terry Bloomfield, Aberdeen Peoples Press, £1.75. Examination of the politics of juvenilia justice in Scotland.

Under Observation: The Computer And Political Control, Campaign Against The Model West Germany, c/o Evangelische Studentengemeinde

(ESG) Querenburger Hohe 287, 4630 Bochum 1, West Germany. The technology of repression in W. Germany.

Disclosure Of Official Information: A Report On Overseas Practice, HMSO E4. Detailed review covering nine countries.

ADIU Report, June 1979. First issue of a new bulletin produced by the Armament and Disarmament Information Unit, Social Policy Research Unit, Sussex University, Brighton. This independent unit gathers information on defence, disarmament and arms control. Recommended.

Region 1 Supplementary, Martin Spence, Black Jake Collective, 20p, 115, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. How the Northern Home Defence Region (HO: Ouston Barracks, near Newcastle) would be run in a state of emergency.

Homa Defence: Region Two, 5p, York Free Press, Box 2, 73 Walmgate, York. How Yorkshire and Humberside would be run in a state of emergency.

What Everyone Should Know About Stata Repression, by Victor Serge, £1, New Park Publications, 21b, Old Town, London SW4.

Crime And The Community, Home Office Research Study No 50, HMSO 65p.

Confidential: Computers, Records And The Right To Privacy, edited by Patricia Hewitt, NCCL. Record of a conference in January 1979 organised by the Institute of Data Processing Management, the National Computing Centre Ltd and the NCCL.

Espionage, Terrorism And Subversion In An Industrial Society, by Peter Hamilton, Peter A. Heims Ltd, hard 275pp, £9.50. An ex-British spy looks at the 'unpleasant facts of modern industrial life' and calls on everyone to safeguard civilisation as we know it.

The Invisible Air Force, Christopher Robbins, Macmillan, hard pp 319, £6.95. Fascinating account of the CIA's use of civil American airlines since World War Two.

World Armaments And Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1979, Taylor and Francis, London, hard 698pp, £21.50. Excellently produced, definitive volume by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Alternative Employment For Naval Shipbuilding Workers, 20p. Benwell CDP (see above). Case study of the resources devoted to the production of the ASW cruiser at Vickers Ltd., Barrow-in-Furness.

ARTICLES

Criminal Procedure

Royal Commission On Criminal Procedure, Brian Hilliard, Police Review, July 13, 1979. An analysis of readers' replies to the magazine's questionnaire on criminal procedure.

Civil Liberties In Scotland, Paul Gordon, Crann Tara, (47 Ashvale Place, Aberdeen), Summer 1979.

Making Verdicts Fit The Evidence/Several Stones Still Unturned, Martin Kettle, New Society May 24, /May 31, 1979. Two articles on the Royal Commission on Police Procedure.

Ways Of Making You Talk, Jeremy Smith, New Statesman, May 4, 1979.

Jury-Vetting: A Challenging Task? Jeremy Smith, New Law Journal, May 17, 1979.

Emergency Planning

Even In A Democracy Some Erosion Of Civil Rights May Be Necessary To Deal With A State Of Emergency, Inspector John Hogan, Police College Magazine, Spring 1979. (Bramshill House, Basingstoke, Hants.)

Could It Happen Here? A Postscript, William Gettridge, Police Journal, July-September 1979. On the possibilities of a coup d'etat.

Extradition

The Exile Of Astrid Proll, Karen Margolis, Time Out, June 29, 1979.

Political Crimes And Extradition, Editorial, New Law Journal, May 17, 1979.

Intelligence

Cuban Crises (two articles) Victor Flinham, Air Pictorial, June 1979/July 1979. (50p, Surridge Dawson & Co, 136-142 New Kent Road, London SE1).

Law And Order

Restore The Death Penalty, Editorial, Police, June 1979.

Jardine Presents Our Shopping List For Stronger Law And Order, Police, June 1979.

Freedom Under The Law, William Whitelaw, Security Gazette, June 1979.

Military

At Ease At Last, News Release, June-August 1979, (1 Elgin Avenue, London W9). On Deserters and AWOLs.

The Armed Forces And Industrial Disputes In The United Kingdom, Geoffrey Marshall, Armed Forces and Society, February 1979.???

Britain's Nuclear Deterrent: The Impending Decisions, John Simpson, ADIU Report, June

1979, (Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, Brighton).

Northern Ireland

The Secret War For Ireland, Stephen Scott/Duncan Campbell, New Statesman, July 13, 1979.

A Terrorist Trial In Crumlin Road, Tom Hadden/Stephen Wright, New Society, June 28, 1979.

Official Secrecy

Remaining In The United Kingdom: Examining The Passport, Lawrence Grant, Legal Action Group Bulletin, July 1979. (£1.55, 28a Highgate Road, London NW5). Detailed exposure of secret notation system used by immigration officers.

Police

Operation Countryman, News Release, June-August 1979. Police corruption investigations.

Mangrova Wins 'Return Match', Duncan Campbell, Time Out, June 29, 1979. On police harassment of West Indian activists in Notting Hill Gate, London.

McNee Bares His Soul, People's News Service, June 26, 1979 (25p, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2). A public address by the Metropolitan Commissioner.

Paddington Green — England's Castlereagh, People's News Service, June 12, 1979.

Information Surgery At The BBC, The Leveller, July 1979, (40p, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1). Police pressure for control of programme content.

Police Federation Conference, Police Raviaw, May 25, 1979.

Police And The Press, Robert Traini, Police Review, June 15, 1979.

Police Computing Experience In Dorset, Police Review, June 29 1979.

Public Order

How The Metro Plans For The Big Ones, J.A. Dellow, Police, June 1979. Police planning for marches and demonstrations in London.

Surveillance

Tapping Telephones In The United States, Clive Morrick, New Law Journal, June 14, 1979.

Saddled With A Snooper's Role, Police Review, July 13, 1979. Criticism of police surveillance of immigrants.

The Threat To Liberty And The Role Of Intelligence-Gathering In Its Defence, Major D.F. Robinson, Army Quarterly, October 1978, (£3.30, 1 West Street, Tavistock, Devon).

State Research

An independent group of investigators collecting and publishing information from public sources on developments in state policy, particularly in the fields of the law, policing, internal security, espionage and the military. It also examines the links between the agencies in these fields and business, the Right and paramilitary organisations.

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The Review of Security and the State

Volume 2 of the Review will be published in autumn 1979. This will contain our year's work in hardback form, i.e. issues 8-13 of State Research Bulletin (October 1978-September 1979), an introductory overview of the year and an index. Hardback (jacketed) £12.00. It can be ordered in advance for £10, direct from Julian Friedmann Books, 4 Perrins Lane, Hampstead, London NW3.

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STATE RESEARCH

**BULLETIN
No. 14**

THE USE OF TROOPS AND POLICE IN STRIKES – JURY

VETTING – MANCHESTER'S POLICE COMPUTER – THE

SCOTTISH CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL – THE SALT-2 TREATY

NEWS & DEVELOPMENTS

INACCURATE POLICE RECORDS

About one-fifth of the population has a police record, much of which consists of inaccuracies, gossip and hearsay. Anyone approaching the police for help stands a good chance of ending up on file for life. That is the conclusion from four incidents in which police record-keeping methods became public. Although they all relate to the Metropolitan Police, procedures are such that there is unlikely to be much deviation in other parts of the country.

Earlier this year, a detective working in the Brixton area of London lost several files, copies of which were eventually

passed to **Time Out** and the **New Statesman**. The files 'provide a unique and chilling view of police methods of getting information' (Duncan Campbell, **New Statesman**, August 10, 1979). Information filed on one woman included the fact that her car was seen outside a house being watched by the Serious Crimes Squad, which was reason enough to open the dossier, though she had no connection with the person — her car had been borrowed by someone else. Also noted was the fact that she had stood bail for someone, moved house, and that her sons had been in contact with the police. One of the sons' files starts with a minor conviction, for which he was fined £1, and records of several brushes with the police, none of which resulted in arrest or conviction. One incident, in which he claimed to have been roughly treated by plain clothes officers, seems a classic sequel to his status as 'known to police'.

The woman's other son, has a number of convictions for theft and burglary — but his file also includes the names of others, without convictions, who are now in police records as his 'associates' because they were once stopped walking down a street with him. Another man, who lodged with this woman, has a police file that claims that he is the father of a child, which he is not.

Such files, prepared locally by the 'collator', or local intelligence officer, and maintained and added to by CID officers in each of the Metropolitan police divisions, no doubt formed the basis for the information on potential jurors in the Persons Unknown case. 19 out of 93 were on police records. These details were printed by *The Guardian* (September 20, 1979). The information disclosed on the potential jurors was drawn from the local CID records and from the national Criminal Records Office, where records on those convicted of most offences are held.

The *Guardian* did not have any details from Special Branch files, which were never handed over by the prosecution (see Jury Vetting, in this Bulletin).

Typical 'local CID' information was that one person's address was 'believed to be a squat'; one had made a complaint against the police, five had been victims of crime and four had no convictions but were 'associates' of criminals. Of the eight with convictions at least four were 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Miller's Tale

'Criminal Intelligence' files at Scotland Yard contain the results of local CID work plus the efforts of the Metropolitan police specialist squads, and information from other forces. These files too seem overfull with hearsay and opinionated comment. At the Old Bailey, Chief Superintendent John Groves, a Metropolitan police officer, is on trial on corruption and official secrets charges, arising out of his relationship with the late Sir Eric Miller. According to the prosecution, the official secrets charge relates to files which he

obtained from C11, Scotland Yard's Criminal Intelligence section, of which copies were passed to Sir Eric. The police file on Sir Eric Miller himself dealt at length with his allegedly close relationship with MPs Sir Harold Wilson, Reginald Maudling and Bob Mellish. According to the file, Sir Eric had provided helicopters for the Labour Party's 1974 election campaigns, and laid on hospitality for party leaders at a London hotel owned by his company, Peachey Properties. The file also contained the comment that Sir Eric was 'a very unpleasant person who would screw anyone for a buck' — as nasty a piece of hearsay as ever passed for a police file. The existence and content of the file is not contested by the defence. But its accuracy may be indicated by the fact that Bob Mellish MP employed a barrister to record in court that the allegations in the file that he had attended Sir Eric's daughter's wedding and knew him closely, were not true. He had never met him.

Much local CID work, and some higher level police work, seems therefore to be based on records of doubtful accuracy. Yet, if the proportion in the Persons Unknown case is reliable, some 20 per cent of people have police records, whereas only eight per cent have convictions. In the whole country, this suggests that there are more than 10 million people on police records — though many may only merit their name and address on a file card. But the police continue to compile such records, and to trade them among different police forces. It was reported recently that:

'Police in F Division, which has Chelsea, Fulham and Queen's Park Rangers in its area, are compiling a special black-list detailing the wild ones. The index will identify all known trouble-makers, those who go to away matches, the way they travel, and other details. Before each away match, police will pass information to other London districts and provincial forces. Eventually they hope to open files on problem fans in the other 19 clubs in the Second Division' (*Evening Standard*, 4.9.1979).

Effectively, there is no right to privacy for someone who the police have decided is 'of interest' to them, and no-one at present has any right to correct mis-statements and biased comments on records which form the basis of local policing.

JURY VETTING

The practice of jury vetting has been challenged yet again by events surrounding the trial at the Old Bailey of six people on charges of conspiracy to rob and possession of arms. The 'Persons Unknown' case is the latest in which the police, on behalf of the prosecution, have investigated potential jurors. Such vetting is standard practice in cases where the police feel that serious crimes have political motives, or believe that a 'gang' of professional criminals is involved. Vetting has again become an important issue because for the first time, the results of the police investigation of jurors has been published, by the *Guardian* on September 20, 1979.

The trial Judge, Alan King-Hamilton, referred the *Guardian* story to the Director of Public Prosecutions, describing it as 'an outrageous intrusion into confidential matters, and not in the public interest.' He discharged the jury panel, and ordered that a new one be vetted. The Metropolitan and City of London police are to investigate the source of the leak.

The vetting of the 93 members of the panel from which the Persons Unknown jury was to be chosen was sought by the police in accordance with guidelines drawn up by the Attorney General in 1975, but not made public until last year. (*The Times* October 11, 1978, and *Bulletin* No 9). The guidelines codified practice which had been common for many years, but included a statement that 'It is open to the police defence... to seek the same information.'

A defence application to vet was duly made, and on August 10, Judge Brian Gibbens at a pre-trial hearing allowed them to do so, and allowed legal aid funds to be used for the private detectives who would carry out the vetting. Not all the defendants

were happy with this in principle. It seems clear that it could not have provided the defendants with the same information in the possession of the police, who, according to the guidelines are allowed to check at the Criminal Record Office, with the Special Branch records (both now held in part on national, computerised files) and with local CID officers.

Details for the defence

At a later pre-trial hearing, Judge Gibbens limited the amount of money which the defence were allowed to spend on investigations, but ordered that the results of the prosecution investigation should be handed to the defence (*Guardian*, September 12, 1979). He specifically referred to the impossibility of an 'anarchist-minded' person trying a case dispassionately (*Leveller*, Oct. 1979). The prosecution in the end promised to hand over only such results of the vetting as did not refer to 'sensitive matters'. In the event, this has been interpreted to rule out all information from Special Branch files, which in practice is the prosecution's main basis for challenges to the jurors.

The information published by the *Guardian* is referred to at greater length in the story 'Inaccurate police records', on page 1. It refers to recorded convictions, and public contact which members of the jury panel had with the police, such as reporting crimes of which they were the victims, or making complaints against the police.

There was no reference to membership of political organisations, attendance at meetings, signing petitions, or any information of the sort which the Special Branch are known to hold. As there are nearly three million people on Special Branch files out of a population of 52 million, it seems unlikely that a random sample of 93 people would contain no-one at all in whom the Special Branch were interested. None of the information printed in the *Guardian* would be useful to the prosecution in determining whether a potential juror, in the words of the guidelines, had political convictions

which were 'of so extreme a character as to make it reasonably likely that they will prevent a juror from trying a case fairly.'

The publication of the partial information has illustrated the extent to which jury vetting is a prosecution weapon, and the impossibility of placing the defence on an equal footing when it is used. The national press has expressed concern, and one member of the original vetted jury panel, transferred to another trial at the Old Bailey, announced that the fact that he had been vetted had biased him against the prosecution. He was again discharged from the jury (**Guardian**, September 25, 1979).

The vetting row will be aired in the House of Commons when Parliament re-assembles. Jo Richardson, MP, Chairperson of the Labour Civil Liberties group, is to ask the Attorney General why the 'Persons Unknown' case merited jury vetting, and the Home Secretary why the practice is allowed to continue.

*A pamphlet from the support group for the six people on trial, 'Persons Unknown', is reviewed elsewhere in this Bulletin.

INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF JAMES MCGEOWN

A public inquiry is to be held into the death of James McGeown who died from injuries sustained while in police custody in Glasgow in November 1978. (The circumstances of the death were more fully explained in **The Leveller**, September 1979 and in the background paper on Special Patrol Groups in Britain in Bulletin No 13.) The decision by the Crown Office to hold an inquiry one year after the death and three months after the unsuccessful prosecution of a police sergeant for culpable homicide, has clearly been influenced by the widespread concern at the case — a petition calling for a reopening of the case was signed by over 4,000 people in the area where the dead man formerly lived — and has been welcomed by both the recently formed James McGeown Justice Committee and the Scottish Council for

Civil Liberties which have been calling for a public inquiry.

The inquiry ordered, however, has been set up in terms of the Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiry (Scotland) Act 1976 and is narrower in scope than a public inquiry 'into any matter connected with the policing of an area' which could be ordered by the Secretary of State under section 29 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967. It is not likely therefore to consider the broader question of the use of Special Patrol Groups which the SCCL feels is an important, indeed crucial, aspect of the McGeown case. (A report in **The Scotsman** said that Strathclyde Police's equivalent of the SPG, the Support Unit, was involved in the apprehension of McGeown and were responsible for taking him to the police station, and that the sergeant who was eventually prosecuted was at the time attached to the Unit. This has now been denied by the police.) In a letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, calling for an inquiry, SCCL said 'This "fire brigade" style of law enforcement leads readily to excessive and dangerous use of violence, and represents a threat to public safety, and to the relationship between the public and the police.'

A Fatal Accident and Sudden Death Inquiry is usually held into a death resulting from an accident at work, one which is suspicious or unexplained or a death in legal custody, although where criminal proceedings have established the circumstances of death an inquiry will not usually be held. Clearly in this case the criminal proceedings which did take place raised, but did not answer, a whole series of questions relating to the circumstances of the death. The inquiry, which will probably take place in November, will involve a rehearing of all the relevant evidence and, as in a criminal trial, all those witnesses cited to appear will have to do so. While there is no finding of fault in such an inquiry the presiding sheriff makes a determination setting out the cause(s) of death and 'the reasonable precautions, if any, whereby the death and any accident resulting in the death might have been avoided'

(section 6) as well as any other facts which are relevant to the circumstances of the death. Such a determination is not admissible as evidence in court proceedings nor may it be founded on for such proceedings but the inquiry may help to answer the question of the general responsibility of the police officers in whose custody McGeown died.

*A definite date has now been set for the Inquiry — November 19.

MANCHESTER: GO-AHEAD FOR POLICE COMPUTER COMPLEX

Greater Manchester Council has given the go-ahead to the Greater Manchester Police for a massive new computer complex. The scheme, costing an estimated £5,395,000 at present prices, is due to start in July 1981, and be operational by 1984 with a life expectancy of 20 years. It will, according to Chief Constable James Anderton, be the largest single local computer system in Britain and possibly in Western Europe. An increasing number of British police forces, particularly urban ones, are adopting 'computer-aided policing'. This is one element in the trend towards 'fire-brigade' policing.

The Manchester system will incorporate several distinct functions: command and control; criminal records; information support; message handling and management information systems. It is also being designed for possible future extensions such as crime reporting and criminal intelligence.

Computerising criminal intelligence has produced a volume of criticism, directed mainly at the Thames Valley criminal intelligence computer and the Metropolitan Police 'C' Department computer. No doubt mindful of this, the study for the Manchester system said: 'The present political climate is not favourable to the retention of such data on police computers. It is of course possible that this climate may change... A generally open mind should be maintained.'

Command and Control

A command and control system (also known as computer-aided despatching) is designed to collate information of incidents and requests for police assistance with information of police resources available, so that a more efficient and faster use of resources is possible. Command and control systems were first introduced in this country in 1972 with a joint Home Office Police Scientific Development Branch/Birmingham City Police experiment based in Birmingham. This was followed in 1975 by an enlarged system in Strathclyde, which was described by the then Chief Constable David McNee as 'the advanced and extensive use of computer equipment by any British Police Force' (**Strathclyde Chief Constable's Report** 1976). Since then both Dorset and Suffolk have introduced similar systems. The proposed Manchester command and control computer will cover the entire force area, with both the Force Control Room and the Divisional offices having visual display units and keyboards. The police say that it will reduce the police response time from minutes to seconds.

The second major application planned is the conversion of the 174,000 personal criminal records held in the Manchester Criminal Records Office (MANCRO). These records, at present held manually, are index only by name and date of birth, and response to inquiries can take up to 17 minutes. The computer will be a fast retrieval system, like the Police National Computer, giving almost immediate response, with a multi-factor search capacity including 'modus operandi' and description, and allowing the storage, indexing and cross-referencing of a mass of random data.

The computer will contain indexes of traffic and minor offences, prostitutes and juveniles who have been cautioned, fingerprints and firearms, as well as actual criminal records covering convictions and sentences. These records will be drawn from those presently held centrally by the Greater Manchester Police, and those in formal records currently held in local

have to apply the due process of law.' By 1978 the annual conference was expressing concern at attempts by local authorities to make their Chief Constables more accountable. And in 1976, the issue of autonomy was raised in ACPO's campaign against the government's bill to introduce an independent element into the system of dealing with complaints against the police. In June 1976, ACPO telexed each of its members asking them to take a stand for or against the bill. The membership responded with unanimous messages of opposition.

A similar lobbying technique was used in 1975 — with greater success — when ACPO mobilised its members against Michael Foot's picketing proposals. Picketing and public order have loomed large in ACPO's emergence in recent years as an active pressure group. In 1977, following the Lewisham disturbances, ACPO announced that 'the police can no longer prevent public disorder in the streets' and called for the passing of 'a new Public Order Act giving the police power to control marches and demonstrations, similar to police powers in Ulster.' At the September 1979 conference it again debated public order, concluding that though officers should be given extra protection on demonstrations, such as body armour worn under the usual uniform, they must avoid looking like the 'man from Mars' the moment they went on 'anti-riot duties.'

Control of juries

ACPO's evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure closely follows the more publicised proposals of Sir David McNee, who is, of course, a prominent ACPO member. 'No further safeguards to the rights of suspects need be given' sums up their view of police powers. In the second volume of its evidence, it called for easier majority verdicts in jury trials. It argued that since magistrates can convict on 2:1 or 3:2 majorities, juries should too. But it would allow the present 10:2 majority to stand if there were 'a closer control of the selection of juries' to remove people who are 'irresponsible or criminally dishonest.'

The working party which prepared ACPO's evidence was chaired by Kent's Chief Constable, Barry Pain. In his own annual report for 1978, Pain regretted that some of the proposals 'caused comment from organisations whose main interest is not the well-being of society.' Pain is one of the assertive new brand of Chief Constables who increasingly dominate ACPO. In a report presented to ACPO's June meeting with local authorities, Pain proposed that the police should be allowed into the classroom to run classes on 'citizenship'. Any heads who refused to allow this should be overruled by education authorities.

The amalgamation of police forces in the 1960s and local government reform in the 1970s helped to create fewer Chief Constables, with weaker local accountability. As a result, the Chief Constables have become more powerful. Their growing influence and the seriousness of ACPO reflect this change and there is every sign that the process is far from complete.

THE SCOTTISH CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL

The powers of the police in Scotland are likely to be greatly increased by a new Scottish Criminal Justice Bill which is presently being drafted for introduction during the next parliamentary session. Like the Bill published by the Labour government in October 1978, this new Bill will take up recommendations made by the 1975 Thomson Report concerning new powers of detention and stop and search. As yet the Government has refused to release details of these new provisions, but in a recent interview Scottish Office Minister Malcolm Rifkind stated that the Tory Bill is to be 'more ambitious' than its predecessor.

Under the Labour Bill the police were to be given: 1) a general power to detain persons suspected of an imprisonable offence in a police station for up to four hours, without arrest or charge. 2) a general power of stop and search, allowing the police to detain suspects at places 'other than a police station' in order to ascertain

their name and address, to search them and to obtain an explanation of their behaviour. 3) a general power to detain possible witnesses or persons suspected of having information about an offence, in order to ascertain their name and address etc. In all cases it would be an arrestable offence to refuse to remain with the police officer, to refuse to give one's name and address or to give a false name and address (see *Bulletin* No 10, page 58).

The prospect of these powers being reintroduced, perhaps in a 'more ambitious' form, has provoked opposition from a large range of groups and organisations. Nevertheless the Government intends to press ahead with these controversial and far-reaching proposals while refusing to engage in any public debate or consultation. Thus there is every likelihood that the Bill will become law in the coming parliamentary session.

In response to these developments a Campaign to Stop the Scottish Criminal Justice Bill has been set up and is currently mobilising support among trade unions, political parties, and civil and minority rights groups. The Campaign is an umbrella organisation which aims to co-ordinate and inform opposition to the Bill. It is particularly opposed to the introduction of powers of detention and stop and search which it believes to be unnecessary, inappropriate and a grave threat to civil rights. Its immediate aim is to press the Scottish Office to publish its proposals in the form of a Green Paper, in order to allow a full and public discussion of the important issues involved.

The address of the campaign is 58 Broughton Street, Edinburgh.

SALT-2: NEW LOOK FOR A COLD WAR

On September 2nd, Jimmy Carter gave the go-ahead for the spectacularly expensive M-X missile system, in an attempt to buy Congressional support for the ratification of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty

(SALT-2). Those opposing SALT-2 claim that a few thousand Soviet troops in Cuba threaten US security, and that the Soviet Union is both spending more on its military than the US, and threatening it with a nuclear first-strike. The Thatcher Government presents a similar case and in this context will make its decision, later this year, on replacing Britain's 'independent' nuclear 'deterrent'.

The SALT-2 Treaty was signed in Vienna in June by Brezhnev and Carter, and the latter has pledged that the US will observe it in any case. But the U.S. Constitution requires its approval by a two-thirds majority of the Senate. SALT talks began as unofficial soundings after the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, and became official negotiations a decade ago; they are thus the oldest symbol of detente. As a means of arms reduction, detente has been a total failure. SALT-1 ran from 1972 until October 1977, and was extended by the two governments pending SALT-2. It limited the number of strategic nuclear delivery systems, and ignored the presence of some 7,000 US 'tactical' nukes in Europe. (Delivery systems are land-, air-, and submarine-launched missiles and strategic bombers). The US had already decided that it had enough delivery systems (see Robert C Aldridge, *The Counterforce Syndrome*, Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, 1978. Aldridge, during his 16 years in Lockheed's engineering department, helped design every submarine-launched ballistic missile bought by the US Navy). The main effort was directed towards increasing their accuracy and number of warheads carried. SALT-1 directed the arms race towards this, without any reduction in expenditure.

In the theory of nuclear war, 'deterrence' depends not on the numbers of missiles or warheads, but on 'mutual assured destruction', or MAD — the near certainty that if either side unleashed a nuclear attack, it would be unable to destroy all enemy forces in one strike. The enemy's surviving forces could inflict unacceptable damage on the 'aggressor'. MAD does not require great accuracy. US Secretary of Defense McNamara in the sixties defined 'unaccept-

able damage' as the deaths of twenty to twenty-five per cent of the population and the destruction of half the industrial capacity. Pentagon experts calculated that, while the reliable delivery of 400 equivalent megatons would destroy 30 per cent of the people and 75 per cent of the industry of the USSR, the US can deliver over 6,000 equivalent megatons. In the 'worst case' of a surprise Soviet attack, there would still be over 2,000 equivalent megatons to assure the destruction of the Soviet Union.

Spending for insecurity

Constant increases in U.S. nuclear capability, justified by claims that the Soviet Union is ahead in this or that respect, have not increased US security in the postwar period. The bomber gap of the fifties, the missile gap of the sixties and now the claims that the Soviet Union has both greater military expenditure and a strategic counterforce advantage over the West turn out to be equally dubious. The director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, points out that continental north America in 1945 was not threatened with attack or invasion from any quarter. But after spending 3,500 billion dollars since 1945 (at 1979 prices) gaining strategic superiority, the US can be destroyed in a matter of minutes. 'American loss of security has been total and expensive.' (Frank Barnaby, *New Scientist*, 23.8.1979, p581).

The 1979 SIPRI Yearbook says: 'The more the two great powers adapt to counterforce nuclear doctrines the greater the probability of a nuclear world war.' U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown's 1980 Annual Report on the Pentagon shows that counterforce has opened a new world of exciting ways to die.

'A strategy based on assured destruction alone no longer is wholly credible ... We now recognize that the strategic nuclear forces can deter only a relatively narrow range of contingencies ... (and) that a strategy and a force structure designed

only for assured destruction is not sufficient for our purposes,' he writes.

Brown then goes on to talk of various possibilities of actually fighting nuclear wars as if they were realistic, even reasonable, policy options, talking of 'the degree to which "hard targets" such as missile silos, command bunkers, and nuclear weapons storage sites need to be completely covered ...' (quoted from *SIPRI Yearbook* p14).

SALT-2 will run to the end of 1985. It limits the number of delivery systems on either side to only 2,400 until the end of 1981, and only 2,250 thereafter. The US has 2,058 and the Soviet Union 2,500 at present, so only the Soviets need reduce deployment. Of these, 1,320 may be 'MIRVed' — equipped with stated numbers of warheads — or in the case of bombers, may carry a definite number of cruise missiles. SALT-2 also includes agreements not to interfere with verification systems, and only to develop, test and deploy one new type of intercontinental ballistic missile — which in the US case will be the M-X. These 'limits' shape or control the arms race, but they do not reduce defence spending.

No 'Soviet threat'

The 1979 SIPRI Yearbook challenges the views that

- Soviet military expenditure now exceeds that of the US.
- military expenditure takes a much larger share than it used to of the Soviet gross national product;
- Soviet military expenditure has, over a long period, been rising in real terms by at least 3 per cent a year, while military expenditure in NATO countries has not been rising at all.

It says: 'These propositions are not "known facts"' — as NATO commentators claim — 'they are highly questionable.' But NATO officials, and officials of all member governments take advantage of the dependence of the average person on

'authoritative' statements about what the facts are to promote 'the Soviet threat'.

The Soviet Union helps by its secrecy, and by publishing only one global figure — 17.2 thousand million roubles — for its military expenditure. A rouble is worth 65 cents at current exchange rates, so US military expenditure of 105 thousand million dollars far outweighs the Soviet budget of 11.2 thousand million. US agencies, of course, do not accept the Soviet figure. They work out what the Soviet Union has in weaponry, personnel, support and so on, and perform a neat little trick — which would fail any first-year economics student. They value the numbers of weapons and people in terms of what it would cost the US to field the same forces. Soviet 'expenditure' therefore increases, according to the CIA/Pentagon/NATO estimates, if the US armed forces get a pay rise.

Relative costs are of course very different in the two countries. Labour in the Soviet Union is cheap, relative to advanced technology, compared to the US. So the USSR uses military workers to perform tasks which in the US are mechanised or electronically performed. These workers are counted as if they cost what the same numbers of workers would cost in the US.

The procedure, SIPRI confirms, is 'wholly invalid'. 'Yet this invalid procedure is the basis of the statement ... (by) political commentators in Western countries that it is a "known fact" that Soviet military expenditure exceeds that of the United States.' (*SIPRI Yearbook*, p30).

Cooking the books

After 1975, western intelligence agencies abruptly reduced their estimates of the productivity of the Soviet military procurement sector. The estimate of Soviet GNP devoted to defence thus rose from 6-8 per cent to 11-12 per cent. SIPRI comments: 'It is the same bundle of goods with higher prices put on them'.

The trend in military expenditure — claimed by the West to be rising in the Soviet Union, static here — is estimated

differently between the two blocs.

For the Soviet Union, a detailed product-by-product comparison is made; improvements in quality thus count as increases. For the West, estimates are based on money expenditure, deflated by price indices. Such a method severely undercounts improvements in quality, exaggerates the real rise in prices (which has included improved quality) and thus underestimates the volume increase. SIPRI comments: 'If, in NATO countries, estimates of the trend in their own military expenditure were made in the same way as estimates for the Soviet Union ... then it is very possible that the "real" series for military expenditure in NATO would show a rising trend as well.'

Though the European members of NATO have not so far been involved in SALT, the next round will specifically address itself to European-theatre nuclear weapons.

The Thatcher government's decision on replacing Polaris, then, will increase Britain's diplomatic bargaining chips for SALT-3. It may also help convince the West Germans to deploy the new version of the US Pershing missiles. Both of these questions have been on the agenda at recent NATO Nuclear Planning Group meetings, and will be central to the December meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, the North Atlantic Council.

Trident terror

The British government could decide not to replace Polaris. It could decide on Cruise missiles, which it could develop with the French, make itself, or buy from the Americans. It could buy more modern submarines which would be tremendously expensive, requiring some sort of US subsidy like that which provided the Polaris under the Nassau agreements — and this would hardly increase British 'independence'. The Poseidon submarine, the US Navy's Polaris replacement, is to be replaced (assuming that the arms race remains unlimited) by the Trident, and the Thatcher government is considering a bid for this. One Trident submarine will carry

which were 'of so extreme a character as to make it reasonably likely that they will prevent a juror from trying a case fairly.'

The publication of the partial information has illustrated the extent to which jury vetting is a prosecution weapon, and the impossibility of placing the defence on an equal footing when it is used. The national press has expressed concern, and one member of the original vetted jury panel, transferred to another trial at the Old Bailey, announced that the fact that he had been vetted had biased him against the prosecution. He was again discharged from the jury (*Guardian*, September 25, 1979).

The vetting row will be aired in the House of Commons when Parliament re-assembles. Jo Richardson, MP, Chairperson of the Labour Civil Liberties group, is to ask the Attorney General why the 'Persons Unknown' case merited jury vetting, and the Home Secretary why the practice is allowed to continue.

•A pamphlet from the support group for the six people on trial, 'Persons Unknown', is reviewed elsewhere in this Bulletin.

INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF JAMES MCGEOWN

A public inquiry is to be held into the death of James McGeown who died from injuries sustained while in police custody in Glasgow in November 1978. (The circumstances of the death were more fully explained in *The Leveller*, September 1979 and in the background paper on Special Patrol Groups in Britain in Bulletin No 13.) The decision by the Crown Office to hold an inquiry one year after the death and three months after the unsuccessful prosecution of a police sergeant for culpable homicide, has clearly been influenced by the widespread concern at the case — a petition calling for a reopening of the case was signed by over 4,000 people in the area where the dead man formerly lived — and has been welcomed by both the recently formed James McGeown Justice Committee and the Scottish Council for

Civil Liberties which have been calling for a public inquiry.

The inquiry ordered, however, has been set up in terms of the Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiry (Scotland) Act 1976 and is narrower in scope than a public inquiry 'into any matter connected with the policing of an area' which could be ordered by the Secretary of State under section 29 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967. It is not likely therefore to consider the broader question of the use of Special Patrol Groups which the SCCL feels is an important, indeed crucial, aspect of the McGeown case. (A report in *The Scotsman* said that Strathclyde Police's equivalent of the SPG, the Support Unit, was involved in the apprehension of McGeown and were responsible for taking him to the police station, and that the sergeant who was eventually prosecuted was at the time attached to the Unit. This has now been denied by the police.) In a letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, calling for an inquiry, SCCL said 'This "fire brigade" style of law enforcement leads readily to excessive and dangerous use of violence, and represents a threat to public safety, and to the relationship between the public and the police.'

A Fatal Accident and Sudden Death Inquiry is usually held into a death resulting from an accident at work, one which is suspicious or unexplained or a death in legal custody, although where criminal proceedings have established the circumstances of death an inquiry will not usually be held. Clearly in this case the criminal proceedings which did take place raised, but did not answer, a whole series of questions relating to the circumstances of the death. The inquiry, which will probably take place in November, will involve a rehearing of all the relevant evidence and, as in a criminal trial, all those witnesses cited to appear will have to do so. While there is no finding of fault in such an inquiry the presiding sheriff makes a determination setting out the cause(s) of death and 'the reasonable precautions, if any, whereby the death and any accident resulting in the death might have been avoided'

(section 6) as well as any other facts which are relevant to the circumstances of the death. Such a determination is not admissible as evidence in court proceedings nor may it be founded on for such proceedings but the inquiry may help to answer the question of the general responsibility of the police officers in whose custody McGeown died.

•A definite date has now been set for the Inquiry — November 19.

MANCHESTER: GO-AHEAD FOR POLICE COMPUTER COMPLEX

Greater Manchester Council has given the go-ahead to the Greater Manchester Police for a massive new computer complex. The scheme, costing an estimated £5,395,000 at present prices, is due to start in July 1981, and be operational by 1984 with a life expectancy of 20 years. It will, according to Chief Constable James Anderton, be the largest single local computer system in Britain and possibly in Western Europe. An increasing number of British police forces, particularly urban ones, are adopting 'computer-aided policing'. This is one element in the trend towards 'fire-brigade' policing.

The Manchester system will incorporate several distinct functions: command and control; criminal records; information support; message handling and management information systems. It is also being designed for possible future extensions such as crime reporting and criminal intelligence.

Computerising criminal intelligence has produced a volume of criticism, directed mainly at the Thames Valley criminal intelligence computer and the Metropolitan Police 'C' Department computer. No doubt mindful of this, the study for the Manchester system said: 'The present political climate is not favourable to the retention of such data on police computers. It is of course possible that this climate may change ... A generally open mind should be maintained.'

Command and Control

A command and control system (also known as computer-aided despatching) is designed to collate information of incidents and requests for police assistance with information of police resources available, so that a more efficient and faster use of resources is possible. Command and control systems were first introduced in this country in 1972 with a joint Home Office Police Scientific Development Branch/Birmingham City Police experiment based in Birmingham. This was followed in 1975 by an enlarged system in Strathclyde, which was described by the then Chief Constable David McNee as 'the advanced and extensive use of computer equipment by any British Police Force' (*Strathclyde Chief Constable's Report 1976*). Since then both Dorset and Suffolk have introduced similar systems. The proposed Manchester command and control computer will cover the entire force area, with both the Force Control Room and the Divisional offices having visual display units and keyboards. The police say that it will reduce the police response time from minutes to seconds.

The second major application planned is the conversion of the 174,000 personal criminal records held in the Manchester Criminal Records Office (MANCRO). These records, at present held manually, are index only by name and date of birth, and response to inquiries can take up to 17 minutes. The computer will be a fast retrieval system, like the Police National Computer, giving almost immediate response, with a multi-factor search capacity including 'modus operandi' and description, and allowing the storage, indexing and cross-referencing of a mass of random data.

The computer will contain indexes of traffic and minor offences, prostitutes and juveniles who have been cautioned, fingerprints and firearms, as well as actual criminal records covering convictions and sentences. These records will be drawn from those presently held centrally by the Greater Manchester Police, and those informal records currently held in local

offices, partly because the manual Criminal Records Office has been too unwieldy for police officers on patrol to use.

The proposed computer is of the same type which was described by the Data Protection Committee on its report published last December as posing 'a grave threat to a person's interests and possibly liberties'. The Committee distinguished between 'information', which is hard, factual data such as name, date of birth, physical description, and 'intelligence', which may be speculative and unverified, such as notes about places frequented, associates and suspected activities. They were concerned about the use of intelligence in conjunction with information.

Information Support

Information held on the computerised MANCRO, the Police National Computer and other sources will be quickly and easily available to police officers patrolling on foot and in cars, through multi-purpose terminals with copy facilities located throughout the force area and linked by radio; this is 'information support'.

The new computer facilities are seen as sufficiently sensitive to warrant housing in a high security purpose-built structure, that will have no street access at all. The only entrance will be via a hardened passage from the adjacent Chester Street Police HQ. The staff will all require 'positive personnel clearance' — that is, the staff will be subjected to a form of positive vetting. (This practice is described in **Bulletin No 12**).

The study which produced the plans for this computerisation was conducted, for a fee of £12,000, by PA Computers and Telecommunications Ltd, a subsidiary of PA International. They are one of the world's largest consultancy firms, who have worked for governments (British, Malaysian and Hungarian amongst others) and large corporations such as the Ford Foundation. They conducted a management study of New Scotland Yard in 1968.

CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS ASK FOR TOUGHER PICKETING LAWS

Picketing and public order were the main topics discussed at this year's annual conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), held at Preston in the first week of September. The meeting decided to press for 'clarification' of picketing law, without at this stage adopting a public position for or against particular changes. This stance differs both from the Superintendents Association, which on 25 September called for tough anti-picketing laws, and from ACPO's previous policy, adopted in 1975, opposing the Labour government's proposal to give pickets a statutory right to stop vehicles.

For the moment, ACPO has set up a specialist committee to draw up detailed policies both on picketing and on public order law generally. These will be submitted to the government before any legislation is proposed. The government has already announced its intention of banning 'secondary' picketing and has set up a legal review of the Public Order Act and related laws, following the demos at Southall and Leicester in April this year.

The subcommittee is chaired by the new president of ACPO, Alan Goodson, Chief Constable of Leicestershire. In April, Goodson deployed 5000 officers to guard a National Front march in the heavily immigrant city of Leicester. Goodson was quoted at the time as saying, 'I treat the National Front in the same way as the Salvation Army.'

ACPO was formed in July 1948. Membership is open to all police officers in England and Wales above the rank of chief superintendent. This includes not only the different grades of Chief Constable but also the Metropolitan Commissioner, Deputy, Assistant and Deputy Assistant Commissioners and Commanders of the Met, as well as the equivalent ranks in the City of London force. Since 1970, it has also included the equivalent officers in the

Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Since 1968, ACPO has had a paid secretariat at Scotland Yard, with a full-time general secretary. This post is currently held by Brian Morrissey, a former Assistant Chief Constable of Hampshire. The cost of the secretariat in 1978-79 was £46,000.

ACPO is run by committees. In overall charge is a steering committee of seven, chaired by the president, and including the general secretary and the Metropolitan Commissioner. Most policy business is dealt with by one of seven specialist committees, covering traffic, communications, crime, computer development, technical services, training and general purposes. As in the case of public order, further ad hoc committees are sometimes formed.

Traditionally, ACPO is regionally based. Regional meetings of members are held four times a year. The eight regions broadly correspond to the eight districts established by the Home Office in 1918 to improve local coordination of and liaison with the police. The regional meetings forward resolutions and views to the secretariat, which refers them to the committees, which in turn report to meetings of the ACPO council, a body consisting of the Metropolitan Commissioner, Chief Constables, the national officers of ACPO and its regional secretaries. ACPO council meetings are also attended by three representatives of ACPO (Scotland), and are held four times a year. The full membership of ACPO attends the annual autumn conference.

Freedom of Manoeuvre

Like the Superintendents Association, but unlike the Police Federation, ACPO is not a statutory body. In July this year, the third report of the Committee of Inquiry on the Police, chaired by Lord Justice Edmund-Davies, proposed that it should stay this way. In evidence, ACPO had strongly opposed statutory recognition. As the report says, 'The Associations ... have made it clear that they would prefer to

forego statutory recognition rather than accept regulations.' In other words, ACPO was keen to retain maximum freedom of manoeuvre.

This desire is closely related to the development of ACPO from its original function as a staff association to become also a focus for senior police opinion and, lately, a pressure group. A Chief Inspector interviewed by sociologist Robert Reiner expressed what is probably the accurate view of ACPO: 'The Association of Chief Police Officers is the one authoritative body the government will go to to seek views.'

No Interference

As long ago as 1962, a Home Secretary — R.A. Butler — addressed an ACPO annual conference. Now, such high-level liaison with the Home Office is routine. However, Robert Mark has pointed out that ACPO's views 'can be and are safely disregarded if they do not accord with ministerial wishes, since the legislators can rely upon the traditional silence of the police.' Mark believed that this reticence allowed the other staff associations — the Federation and the Superintendents Association — to make 'irresponsible and ill-informed comment' on matters 'of which they have no experience or knowledge and for which they have no responsibility.' The continuing tension which exists between the other associations and ACPO was amply demonstrated in the evidence to Edmund-Davies, with ACPO determinedly fighting off any attempts to erode the discretion and powers of Chief Constables.

Initially, ACPO's opinion-making function was largely confined to regular consultation and to the submission of evidence to government inquiries. Police independence from outside control has always been an important theme. In 1962, they told the Royal Commission on the Police that a policeman 'must be part of the community, and yet at the same time it is always dangerous to become on too intimate terms with people to whom at any time he may